

(1)

Factum
OF THE
FRENCH,
AND OTHER
PROTESTANTS
IN THE
SAVOY.



Hat as well the safety as the glory of a Land consists in the well-peopling of its Towns, and the great number of its Inhabitants, is a truth clear and unquestionable; and that the union of those Inhabitants in matter of Religion, is the assurance and security of such a Land, is another as little to be controverted. Civil dissensions contribute not more to ruine a Kingdom, than union and a fair understanding to the peace and welfare of it; by the one the strongest foundations are shaken, but by the other the whole fabric is supported and rend'ed unmovable: and of all dissensions that can befall a Nation, those about Religion are the worst, the most plausible in their pretences, the most dreadful in their consequences, and the first to be provided against.

It was on that consideration, that the wise Queen *Elizabeth* received those that in such great numbers were forced to forsake their Countrey (by the violent persecution of them for their Religions sake) into *England*; although the number of its Inhabitants then, yielded not in the least to that of our days, assigned them Towns to dwell in, gave them Churches and Priviledges, with the publick exercise of their Religion: and it was no doubt the same consideration that moved the wise and excellent Prince, under whose Protection we now live, by several Proclamations, to invite distressed Protestants beyond Sea, to take refuge in his Kingdom, declaring himself their Protector, and by many daily acts in their favour, confirming his pious intentions to continue so still.

A

If

If Kings are generally stiled the Fathers of their Countrey, we may say of this Prince, that he is ours in a special manner, for both in War and Peace, he hath been graciously pleased to protect us, allowing us a Church, maintaining our Ministers in part, and by daily repeated marks of his good will towards us, encourage our brethren abroad, to partake of the benefit of his powerful protection, who flock hither in great numbers: and certainly if His Majesties Subjects did follow his pious and discreet example, we should in few years see so great an affluence of Protestants, as would be sufficient to people those many quarters, both in Town and Countrey, which are now not inhabited, for they desire but a safe retreat to serve God in peace; which they are sure not to meet within any place or Kingdom, where the *Romish* Religion hath any Power or Interest, nor indeed in any other Countrey, though of their own belief, so well as in this.

Several great men of the Nation, after their Kings example, have greatly endeavoured to oblige the distressed Protestants of forreign Countreys, to come over and occupy the many waste Lands that they have here and in *Ireland*, and their endeavours have not been altogether vain, for we see Lands that were but a charge to the owners, become fast and fruitful soils to the owners, and not only those worthy and charitable Persons invite others over, but favour, countenance, and support those that are already here; our Church is often honoured with the Presence of His Majesties Privy Counsellors, Secretaries of State, and other great Officers of the Kingdom; and indeed, it's through that means that our Church does almost wholly subsist, the Contributions of such *French* Families as are able, being very inconsiderable. The worthy Bishop of the City vouchsafes to come there sometimes, who does so passionately desire our good, as to maintain many of our Proselytes, who might else, but for his help and pious assistance, be in a very needy condition: for there are many of them, and the Church but poor and unable to furnish what their necessities require, though each of them should have but three, as they that have most, have but four shillings a week.

The coming and continuing of Protestants into this Kingdom can so little prejudice, as it must needs be of advantage to it; they come with an intention to live and dye here, bring with them not only their Arts and Sciences, but what Estate they have: we conform to the Church of *England* in all things, as it is now established and authorised, pay double Parish Duties, which we are told we must, being strangers: now if (as the Papists who are in greater numbers than we) we should speak evil of Dignities, infect His Majesties Subjects with false and damnable Principles, to draw them from their allegiance, and seduce them to disobedience and sedition: or like them, get Estates here, then convey them and our selves home again; so spending abroad what we got here, we confess that in such case we should deserve to be as hardly dealt withal,

*Pignon.
Roche.
Beller.
Gori.
Isacq. &c.
have conveyed their
Estates into
France.*

as now we are: but there is nothing less, nor can one instance of example be produced of any Protestant, who after he had enriched himself here, returned to his own Countrey, but contrarily, we leave what Estates we get to our Children after us, and make it our business to fashion and bring them up to the ways and customs of the Countrey, and they often so far answer that Education, as not to speak two words of good *French*.

Now for our belief, 'tis the same with that of the Countrey, we own no Superior to the King, but God only, and every where, and upon all occasions, declare that he is not of our Faith, that will not do as he is commanded, Fear God, and Honour the King; and if of late some have endeavoured to persuade people here, that the contrary is believed and taught by our Brethren abroad, we protest that it is an injustice, and false assertion, craftily given out by the secret favourers of the *Romish* Religion, to render us odious to the people, and further the interest of the other party, by an outward appearance of desiring earnestly, and more than any others, the good of the King and his people, though such persons are nothing less than what they seem, and do really in secret, with the destruction of both, as their Principles and actions do too well assure us: which occasioned King *James* to say, that he did not see how it was possible for a man to be a good Subject, and a good Papist, a Truth too well known, and which the experience of many years hath made good and confirmed; for indeed the interest of the Kings of *England*, and those of the Pope, being so different and exactly opposite and contrary, how is it possible for a man really to desire the good of the one, when he actually endeavours to promote, and as far as he can, advances the interest of the other.

These one would think should be sufficient reasons to oblige the people here to a kind and loving reception of us, as formerly they did when they considered the reason and occasion of our coming hither, for the free exercise of our Religion, deliverance of persecutions, and avoiding of temptations, which are there very frequent: yet we find so great an aversion in them, from us, as to envy us the bread we get by our honest and hard labours, and would compell us to return under the persecution we fled, or which is little (if at all) better to dwell here as once the *Jews* did in *Egypt*, a kind of slaves to take all the pains, and they reap all the fruits: a sad choice and a hard usage, which cannot be believed by our brethren abroad, who look upon this Land as a Sanctuary and refuge of Protestants, and who, in that consideration, rejoyce for its good, and take part in its misfortunes: yet it is true, that we are so dealt withal by the Masters and Overseers of the Companies, who, to palliate that unkindness to us, with the face of Authority, alledge an Act of Parliament in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, by which Act it is Provided, That all such as have not served seven years to their Trades, shall be obliged

to certain payments; which they require of us, but that is but a weak pretext, for the same Parliament, almost at the same time, invites the persecuted Protestants of *Flanders*, and of other Countreys, to take refuge here, with full leave to work in their several Callings, which shews that other Act concerns not them, nor consequently the Protestants at this day, whose case is the same with theirs of those times. Nor can it be supposed, that so wise a Queen and Parliament would onely invite us hither to compell us to return again; for what else in effect is the hindering of us to work and labour in our Callings, without which it is impossible to subsist? and it is plain, that the end and design of that Act, was to provide against a mischief of that time; when several set up Masters, who had never served to their Trades, and by that Ignorance and small abilities in them, caused great inconveniencies.

Surely if Christian Charity did not oblige us to the contrary, we might not improbably believe, that these men that harass and torment us, have little or no Religion, (since they delight to afflict them that are afflicted for it) or mis-affected to the good of the Prince and his People, that act so directly contrary to the intentions of the one, and trouble the quiet and repose of the other, or else persons inclined to favour the *Romish* party, since they doe to us here, as they do in our own Countrey: but we hope that those persons will cease that usage, and consider that one of the main Duties of a Christian, is to give Bread to the hungry, and that Hospitality is a Virtue greatly recommended.

FINIS.
